

REMARKS

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and allowance of the subject application in view of the preceding amendments and the following remarks.

To place the subject application in better form, the specification has been amended to correct minor informalities. No new matter has been added by these changes.

Claims 11-22 are presented for consideration in lieu of claims 1-10, which have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 11 and 17 are independent. Support for these claims can be found in the original application, as filed. Therefore, no new matter has been added.

Applicant notes with appreciation that claims 3-5 and 7 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter and would be allowed if rewritten in independent form to include the recitations of their base and intervening claims. To expedite allowance of this application, Applicant has rewritten claim 3 in independent form as new independent claim 11. The Examiner will note that independent claim 11 includes the features previously recited in claims 1-3. In addition, Applicant has rewritten claim 7 in independent form as new independent claim 17. The Examiner will note that independent claim 17 includes the features previously recited in claims 1, 2 and 7. Dependent claims 12-16 depending from independent claim 11 correspond to prior dependent claims 4-8, whereas dependent claims 18-22 depending from independent claim 17 correspond to prior dependent claims 3-6 and 8. Applicant submits that these changes render claims 11-22 allowable over the art of record.

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action.

Claims 1, 2, 6 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,623,853 to Novak et al. Claims 9 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over the Novak et al. patent and in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,396,568 to Nishi. Applicant submits that the cited art, whether taken individually or in combination, does not teach or suggest many features of the present invention as previously recited in claims 1-10. Therefore, these rejections are respectfully traversed.

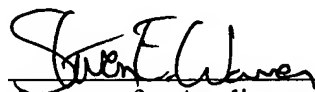
Nevertheless, as discussed above, to expedite allowance of the subject application, Applicant now presents claims 11-22 in lieu of claims 1-10, which have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. For the reasons noted above, Applicants submits that claims 11-22 should be deemed allowable over the art of record.

Applicant requests that the Examiner contact his undersigned representative should any matters be deemed outstanding precluding allowance of the subject application.

Applicant further submits that the instant application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action and an early Notice of Allowance are requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010 All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Steven E. Warner", is written over a horizontal line.

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